

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO ALL EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

USSAGE

CINCPAC

COGARD

XMT AMEMBASSY SUVA

UNCLAS STATE 065263

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, XC, US

SUBJECT: APRIL 1, EA PRESS SUMMARY

INDOCHINA

1. SEN. KENNEDY'S OFFICE RELEASES LETTER FROM HAK IN WHICH SECRETARY SAYS US COMMITTED TO AID SVN DESPITE LACK OF FORMAL TREATY. SEC. STATES LETTER SENT IN REPLY TO EARLIER KENNEDY REQUEST, PROMPTED BY CONFLICTING REPORTS, FOR INFO ON KINDS AND LEVELS OF US CURRENT INVOLVEMENT IN INDOCHINA. LETTER SAID US COMMITTED ITSELF "POLITICALLY AND MORALLY" TO STRENGTHENING CONDITIONS THAT MADE C-F POSSIBLE AND TO GOAL OF SVN UNCLASSIFIED

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PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, AND "WITH THESE COMMITMENTS IN MIND" WE CONTINUE TO PROVIDE SVN MEANS FOR SELF-DEFENSE AND ECON VIABILITY. ALSO STATED THAT US OBLIGATED, BECAUSE OF LONG INVOLVEMENT AND

NATIONAL SELF-INTERESTS, TO ACHIEVING STABLE GOVT. IN SVN. LETTER ADDED FUNDAMENTAL C-F PROBLEM IS DRV DETERMINATION TO SEIZE SVN POLITICAL POWER THROUGH MIL MEANS, AND THOUGH US HAS NO WRITTEN COMMITMENT TO DRV, WE ARE PREPARED TO PROCEED WITH RECONSTRUCTION AID WITH CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL SHOULD HANOI TURN AWAY FROM A MIL SOLUTION. HAK LETTER SAID THAT AT MOMENT LAOS IS BRIGHT SPOT, BUT SERIOUS MIL PROBLEMS REMAIN IN CAMBODIA WHERE CONTINUED HARD FIGHTING EXPECTED DURING NEXT FEW MONTHS. KENNEDY FINDS LETTER DISTRESSING

BECAUSE "IT SHATTERS THE HOPE THAT WE COULD FINALLY DISENGAGE" FROM DIRECT SVN INVOLVEMENT, AND "APPARENTLY THE ADMIN, NOW VIEWS THE PARIS AGREEMENT ... AS CREATING NEW AMERICAN COMMITMENTS TO SVN."

2. SEN. SAYS LETTER "SEEMS TO PROPOUND A NEW RATIONALIZATION FOR OUR CONTINUED HEAVY INVOLVEMENT," SEES ADMIN.'S INTERPRETATION OF C-F AS "PERPETUATING OLD RELATIONSHIPS AND CONTINUING OLD POLICIES, AS IF NOTHING HAD CHANGED," NOTES THAT PARIS AGREEMENT WAS NEVER SUBMITTED TO SENATE AS TREATY FOR RATIFICATION, AND CONCLUDES THAT ADMIN.'S INDOCHINA COMMITMENTS WILL COST "ABOUT THREE BILLION DOLS" THIS YEAR (AP SUN, PHINQ; UPI CHITRIB, NYDN).

3. MASLEY (WP) REVIEWS SECSTATE LETTER AND KENNEDY COMMENTS; QUOTES KENNEDY THAT LETTER IS "WELCOME BUT DISTURBING CLARIFICATION" OF US POLICY. COMMENTS THAT HAK "DECLINED TO PROVIDE THE DOLLAR AMOUNTS OF US ECON ASSISTANCE"; BUT KENNEDY STAFFER DE HAAN ESTIMATES IT AT THREE BILLION DOLS FOR THIS FY -- BASED ON HAK LETTER AND SEVERAL REPORTS BEING PREPARED BY GAO -- WHICH IS "ABOUT ONE BILLION DOLS HIGHER THAN OFFICIAL ESTIMATES."

4. SEN. FULBRIGHT, AT REQUEST OF MIA KIN, SENDS UNCLASSIFIED

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LETTER TO SECSTATE ASKING FOR HELP TO ARRANGE CONGRESSIONAL VISIT TO DRV TO OBTAIN INFO ON MIAS. ASST. SECSTATE HOLTON EARLIER SAID DOS WOULD NOT OBJECT (WP; AP, PHINQ).

5. USSR BACKS HANOI'S CHARGE THAT US VIOLATES C-F, CALLS FOR END TO VIOLATIONS (AP, PHINQ). NYT FROM MOSCOW QUOTES TASS STATEMENT, IN SHARPEST ATTACK ON US VN POLICY IN MANY MONTHS, THAT US SHOULD HALT SVN ARMS SHIPMENTS. STATEMENT ENDORSES DRV NOTE TO FORMER PEACE CONFEREES CONCERNING US C-F VIOLATIONS, BACKS VC PROPOSALS FOR C-F OBSERVANCE AND MOVES TOWARD NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND ELECTIONS, AND BLAMES

US FOR "PERSISTENT TENSION" IN SVN DUE TO SUPPORT OF GVN REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE "TWO ZONES OF CONTROL, TWO ADMINISTRATIONS AND TWO ARMED FORCES" IN SVN. STATEMENT SEEN AS RESPONSE TO DRV PRESSURE ON USSR TO PUSH US AND GVN TO CUT BACK MIL OPERATIONS AGAINST VC, AND FOLLOWS PHAM VAN DONG TALKS WITH KOSYGIN IN MID-MARCH AND HAK CONVERSATIONS WITH BREZHNEV, THOUGH OFFICIAL STATEMENTS ON LATTER DID NOT INDICATE VN WAS DEALT WITH "EXTENSIVELY" (ALSO IN SUN).

6. COMMUNISTS BOMBARD GVN CAMP AT DUC HUE NEAR KHMER BORDER AS SVN CHOPPERS TRY TO EVACUATE DEAD AND WOUNDED. ATTACK STARTED WED. PHOTOGRAPHER WHO GOT OUT SAYS BASE "95 PERCENT" DESTROYED (AP CHITRIB, SUN, WP).

7. CSM'S OKA FROM SAIGON WRITES OF SITUATION ONE YEAR AFTER US SOLDIERS' DEPARTURE. CITY IS MORE SUBDUED, TRAFFIC LIGHTER, PRICES OF GAS, KEROSENE AND RICE MUCH HIGHER, MANY MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES SELL POSSESSIONS TO LIVE. OKA SEES COUNTRY AS "POTENIALLY RICH" IF FOREIGN CONFIDENCE AND POLITICAL STABILITY RESTORED, SINCE DELTA CAN PRODUCE MUCH FOOD, LUMBER EXPORTS AND FISHERIES COULD EARN MUCH AND OFFSHORE OIL IS "HOPEFUL POSSIBILITY." BUT PROBLEMS OF WAR REMAIN AND SVN "TRIES TO GET BY AS BEST IT CAN."

8. ICCS INVESTIGATORS STONED WHEN WENT TO SITE OF UNCLASSIFIED

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CAI LAY INCIDENT, WILL MEET MONDAY TO DECIDE WHETHER TO CONTINUE INVESTIGATION (WP).

9. PALACE SOURCE SAYS THAT LON NOL "WITH US ADVICE" SETS UP "HIGH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL," DISSOLVES HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL. NEW COUNCIL IS "TO ASSIST THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN ITS WORK," AND INCLUDES LON NOL, SIRIK MATAK, PM LONG BORET AND MG SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ. IN TAM AND CHENG HENG, MEMBERS OF OLD COUNCIL, WERE DROPPED. CHANGE SEEN PRIMARILY AS MOVE TO GET MORE AGREEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESS (AP CHITRIB, SUN). FORMER POLITICAL COUNCIL HAD "ENORMOUS POWER" BUT WAS UNABLE TO AGREE ON ANYTHING IN RECENT MONTHS. THREE MINISTERS RESIGN FROM CABINET IN PROTEST AGAINST DISSOLUTION OF HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL. SHAKE-UP COINCIDES WITH SCHEDULED ARRIVAL OF AMB. DEAN (WP).

10. GRK SPOKESMAN SAYS COMMUNISTS STEP-UP PRESSURE ON KAMPOT AND HARD FIGHTING CONTINUES IN AREA. REBELS ALSO SHELL BESIEGED TAKEO (WP).

CHINA

11. WITH ACCOMPANYING UPI TELEPHOTOS, CSM AND CHITRIB REPORT FIRST PRC COMMERCIAL JETLINER LANDED AT KENNEDY AIRPORT SATURDAY NIGHT CARRYING 23 PERSONS, INCLUDING TWO US AVIATION OFFICIALS AND CHINESE AVIATION PERSONNEL.

12. BRAZIL FORNMINISTRY ANNOUNCES IT WILL SEND FIRST

OFFICIAL MISSION TO PEKING TO LOOK INTO POSSIBLE GOB-PRC COMMERCE (UPI, NYDN).

13. RADIO PEKING WARNS US THAT SOVIET MILITARY ACTIVITIES ORIGINATING IN CARIBBEAN HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO "HAMSTRING" US IN ITS "COMPETITION" WITH SOVIET FOR "CONTROL OF EUROPE" (WP).

JAPAN

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14. WJS'S PEARLSTINE FORESEES JAPANESE BUSINESSMEN EXPECTING MARKED DECLINE IN DOMESTIC DEMAND IN MONTHS AHEAD. ADVISES THAT SINCE JAPANESE PRODUCERS ARE EXTREMELY RELUCTANT TO CUT PRODUCTION TO COPE WITH DWINDLING SALES AT HOME, BECAUSE THEIR FIXED COSTS ARE TOO HIGH, THIS WILL MEAN STEP-UP IN JAPANESE SALES EFFORTS ABROAD, INCLUDING US. FEELS JAPANESE MAKERS OF STEEL, AUTOS AND MACHINERY COULD JOIN IN "OFFENSIVE."

15. JAPAN AND USSR SCHEDULED TO BEGIN TALKS APR. 1 ON DEVELOPMENT OF SIBERIAN NATURAL RESOURCES AGAINST BACKGROUND OF SKEPTICISM ABOUT US PARTICIPATION. IN FACE OF OPPOSITION BY CONGRESSIONAL "HAWKS," DOS REPORTED MAINTAINING WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE CONCERNING US ROLE. NEGATIVE US STAND ON TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY SEEN MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR GOJ, UNDER SECURITY SETUP WITH US, TO ACCEPT SOVIET BID FOR OPERATIONS THIS PROJECT (WP).

16. US ANNOUNCED FRIDAY THAT TARIFFS ON MOST BALL BEARINGS WILL BE DOUBLED OR MORE, EFFECTIVE MAY 1, MARKING ONE OF BIGGEST PROTECTIVE TARIFF HIKES IN RECENT US HISTORY. US OFFICIALS APPEAR REASONABLY CONFIDENT JAPAN WILL NOT MOVE QUICKLY WITH REPRISALS (JOC, WSJ).

KOREA

17. OBERDORFER (WP) FROM DMZ QUOTES ROK GENERAL THAT NK ARMY CONSTRUCTING NEW POSTS AND MOVING NEW

RUSSIAN-BUILT TANKS INTO FRONT AREA AS WELL AS BRINGING IN MORE ARTILLERY PIECES AND AA GUNS, ALL IN VIOLATION OF THE 1953 ARMISTICE. OBERDORFER HEARS INCREASED TALK OF MIL TENSION AND DESIGNS IN SK AND LESS DISCUSSION OF NK-SK POLITICAL DIALOG THAT "SURPRISED THE WORLD" WHEN IT BEGAN IN 1972 AND PRODUCED DETENTE AND RELAXATION OF ANTIPATHY FOR ABOUT YEAR THAT BENEFITTED BOTH SIDES.

ON JULY 4, 1972, BOTH SIDES AGREED NOT TO SLANDER EACH OTHER. BUT FULL-SCALE POLITICAL MEETINGS HAVE NOT UNCLASSIFIED

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TAKEN PLACE SINCE LAST JUNE, AND NK PROPOSED DIRECT PYONGYANG-WASHINGTON TALKS TO PRODUCE A PEACE AGREEMENT. WASHINGTON SUGGESTED THAT THEY SHOULD TALK "EARNESTLY" TO SK. PERSISTENT ROK EFFORTS TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE USSR AND PRC HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL AND MIL BUILDUP CONTINUES ON BOTH SIDES OF DMZ. ANOTHER FACTOR MAY BE WISH OF ROK TO SUBSTITUTE WORRY ABOUT NK FOR RECENTLY GROWING FERMENT AGAINST "SQUELCHING" OF DEMOCRACY. PARK SEEMS UNWILLING TO TOLERATE CRITICISM OR DISSENT. US IS LESS ALARMIST ABOUT NK THREAT THAN PARK THOUGH ALL AGREE ON NK BUILDUP.

INDONESIA

18. WSJ AND REUTER JAKARTA (NYT) REPORT GOI ANNOUNCEMENT OF OIL PRICE HIKE FROM 10.80 DOLS PER BBL TO 11.70 BEGINNING APRIL 1. REUTER CITES PERTAMINA SPOKESMAN THAT INCREASE MAINLY INTENDED TO INCREASE STATE'S REVENUE AND NOT RELATED TO CURRENT ENERGY CRISIS.

AUSTRALIA

19. AP PERTH (SUN) REPORTS W AUSTRALIA LABOR GOVT. SWEEPED OUT OF POWER IN MARCH 30 STATE ELECTIONS. VOTE VIEWED AS FURTHER INDICATION OF HOSTILITY TO GOA'S RURAL POLICIES, PARTICULARLY A DECISION TO REMOVE FERTILIZER SUBSIDY. STATE'S NEW PREMIER WILL BE SIR CHARLES COURT.

20. REPORT FROM PARIS (CSM) CITES PRO-GOVT. LE POINT WEEKLY THAT FRANCE IS PREPARING TO RECOMMENCE OPEN-AIR NUCLEAR TESTS IN PACIFIC THIS SPRING; TESTS WOULD PROBABLY INCLUDE H-BOMB THIS YEAR. WEEKLY ADDED THAT GOA IS LOOKING INTO POSSIBLE DIPLOMATIC MECHANISMS FOR CONTINUING ITS STRONG PROTEST AGAINST PACIFIC TESTS.

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

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21. GLOBE (MARCH 29) REFERS TO STUDIES BY SASC AND SEN. HUGHES THAT SUGGEST US GROUND TROOPS CONDUCTED ARMED COMBAT RAIDS INTO LAOS AND CAMBODIA IN VIOLATION OF CONGRESSIONAL LEGISLATION; ALSO NOTES HUGHES' CONTENTION THAT THERE WERE 60 GROUND

OPERATIONS BETWEEN 1970 - YEAR AFTER BAN PASSED - AND END OF US INVOLVEMENT IN 1973. EXPRESSES VIEW THAT FRESH ROUND OF HEARINGS INTO PROCESS WHEREBY MILITARY DECIDED TO CROSS INTERNATIONAL BORDERS WOULD BE INVALUABLE. SAYS ACTUAL DECISION-MAKING SHOULD BE MADE PART OF THE PUBLIC'S AWARENESS AS GUIDE TO THE MILITARY AND AS WARNING TO GENERAL POPULATION ABOUT DANGERS ASSOCIATED WITH NOMINALLY LIMITED WARS.

JAPAN

22. CHITRIB'S KIRK IN YOKUSUKA QUOTES MASAMICHI INOKI, PRES. OF JAPAN DEFENSE ACADEMY, THAT US SHOULD PERMIT JAPAN SET UP BASES ON US SOIL, ARGUING THAT US VIRTUALLY OWES JAPAN SPACE AND POSSIBLY FACILITIES FOR BASES UNDER MST TERMS; THAT SINCE US FORCES BASED IN JAPAN IN KEEPING WITH TREATY, WHY NOT LET JAPANESE GO TO AMERICA AS WELL? KIRK NOTES THAT IDEA OF US-JAPAN "EQUALITY OF PARTNERSHIP" HAS GAINED CURRENCY IN JAPAN IN RECENT YEARS, PARTICULARLY SINCE OKINAWA REVERSION. MAJOR DRAWBACK TO INOKI SUGGESTION, HOWEVER, IS JAPANESE CONSTITUTION FORBIDDING DISPATCH OF ANY TROOPS OVERSEAS. BUT INOKI PREDICTS THAT DIET POLITICIANS, SENSING NEW DRIFTS IN PUBLIC OPINION, WILL VOTE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION PERMITTING DISPATCH OF TROOPS OVERSEAS UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES. INOKI SUGGESTS JAPANESE FORCES SHOULD SERVE WITH UN CONTINGENTS IN PEACEKEEPING ROLES ANYWHERE EXCEPT IN SEA, WHERE UNFAVORABLE MEMORIES OF JAPANESE STILL LINGER.

23. RICHARD GILLULY (SUN) RECALLS BEAUTY OF JAPANESE LANDSCAPE BEFORE CONSUMERISM AND INDUSTRIALIZATION HIT JAPAN; THUS, OPPOSES REPORTED PLAN OF MITSUI
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TO STRIP-MINE COAL IN PARTS OF MONTANA WHICH ARE NEARLY EMPTY OF HUMAN ARTIFACTS. IMPLIES NEED FOR BALANCE BETWEEN MAN'S MATERIAL AND ESTHETIC REQUIREMENTS.

CHINA

24. ROBERT E. FILLET, PRES. OF US-CHINA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND CHRISTOPHER H. PHILLIPS, PRES. OF NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR US-CHINA TRADE, WRITE ON PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF US-CHINA TRADE (JOC). BOTH NOTE TRADE IMBALANCE IN FAVOR OF US BECAUSE PRC DOES NOT ENJOY MFN STATUS. PHILLIPS SAYS HE

WILL TESTIFY BEFORE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF EXTENDING MFN TREATMENT TO CHINA. BOTH SEE PROMISING PROSPECTS FOR US-CHINA TRADE, AND BOTH INTERESTINGLY END THEIR ARTICLES WITH QUOTE FROM SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE THAT SINO-US ECONOMIC RELATIONS WILL BE BASED ON "EQUALITY AND MUTUAL BENEFIT."

PHILIPPINES

25. NYT'S SCHANBERG IN JOLO DOES BACKGROUND PIECE ON MOSLEM INSURGENTS, NOTING THEIR SEEMING FRAGMENTATION, THEIR GRIEVANCES, DIFFERENCES IN CHARACTER OF INSURGENCY BASED ON REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND THEIR REPORTED SOURCE OF MATERIAL SUPPORT. OBSERVES THAT MALTREATMENT OF MOSLEM MINORITY HAS BEEN FACT OF PHIL LIFE FOR 400 YEARS, AND RECOUNTS 1906 FIGHT BETWEEN US ARMY AND TAUSUGS IN HEIGHTS AROUND JOLO. REPORTS COL. RILLERA, MILITARY COMMANDER ON JOLO ISLAND, AS BEING AWARE OF TAUSUGS' TRADITIONS AND THE IMPROBABILITY OF SUBDUING THEM. RILLERA WAS IN VN IN LATE 1960S AS CHIEF OF PHIL "PACIFICATION" TEAM IN TAY NINH PROVINCE AND RECALLS THAT TEAM WON OVER MANY HAMLETS BECAUSE "WE SHOWED WE CARED ABOUT THEM"; ADDS, "IT IS WHAT WE MUST DO HERE." SCHANBERG COMMENTS THAT COLONEL "DOES NOT MENTION THAT TAY NINH PROVINCE HAS LARGELY REVERTED TO COMMUNIST CONTROL." SCHANBERG OBSERVES THAT WHILE PHIL CONFLICT IS NOT STRICTLY UNCLASSIFIED

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ANALOGOUS TO INDOCHINA WAR, THERE ARE SIMILARITIES. GOP'S MILITARY EQUIPMENT IS PROVIDED BY US AND MOST OF OFFICERS TOOK TRAINING HERE.

GENERAL

26. WSJ'S HARTLEY IN TAIPEI REPORTS SEA COUNTRIES FINDING THEIR ECONOMIES NOT AS HARD HIT BY OIL CRISIS AS INITIALLY EXPECTED. BIGGEST PROBLEM IS NOT SHORTAGES BUT SKYROCKETING PRICES FOR OIL AND OIL-RELATED PRODUCTS. RUSH

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